CBS NEWS - 48 HOURS - PRESIDENT CLINTON INTERVIEW (3-24 -1993)

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From March 24th, 1993 CBS NEWS DAN RATHER's 48 HRS. interview with President Bill Clinton at the White House

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interview with president clinton our nation needs a new direction we don't know enough what he's working on tough times at home people need to be working turmoil overseas we can move the world from high ideals on the campaign trail we'll give you your country back full of prayers major health care reform legislation to hard realities in the oval office i have a lot of tough decisions to make i would give president clinton so far i'll be plus a minus they have explicitly broken trust to the american people you've heard the critics we're being asked to buy a pig in a poke here we're here to discuss the economy now it's his turn to talk the time has come for the blame to end an interview with the president [Music] good evening and welcome to a special edition of 48 hours the program originally scheduled for broadcast at this time will not be broadcast in order we can bring you this special edition of 48 hours an interview with president bill clinton we're in the oval office of the white house mr president thank you for doing this we appreciate your hospitality welcome man how are you feeling i feel fine thanks got a cold a little bit of a cold but it's you know springtime's coming now it's warming up it's a it's wonderful to be here now you know i don't know anybody who knows you well who isn't worried about your lack of sleep even mrs clinton recently mentioned it how much do you sleep about six hours a night normally and i'm trying to sleep a little more now in all of my adult life six hours is about the most i've ever slept except when i was really exhausted

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slept except when i was really exhausted now it has to be the least i sleep i confess that i need a little more sleep now that i have taken on this job you're a night person morning person a little bit of both that's the problem i i normally i leave here maybe between seven and eight go home and go home and have dinner with hillary and chelsea and then try to maybe work another hour or two and then i get up between 6 and 6 30 every morning go for a run and see chelsea off and then come to the office well the office being here in the oval office you know you dreamed of being here now the great sea of the united states on the rug great sea of the united states on the ceiling what's the difference between the dream and the reality i haven't thought a lot about it actually the reality is that from the day i got here we've had a world of work to do an enormous a domestic agenda all the things that i ran on and then all the the difficulties abroad the challenge with russia and other things so that i enjoy coming to work here every day it's an enormous privilege even the tough days are good days but i haven't spent any time thinking about how i thought about it before it happened i want to talk to you about russia and healthcare the economy a lot of things but it occurs to me that so many americans are very proud of the oval office never have an opportunity to come in do you mind showing us around for a few minutes well first of all let's let's look at it this oval office was put here by president franklin roosevelt it's in the west wing of the white house the two wings were built by president theodore roosevelt in 1902 and the old house was begun in 1792 but a lot of people don't know that that

house was just there in the house until 192. so every president since franklin roosevelt has had this oval office as an office as well as an office over in the white house proper and as you can see it's a very beautiful place i've got the same painting many presents have had here that's rembrandt peels

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here that's rembrandt peels painting of george washington and a great painting of andy jackson there man i admired very much it was also in here when i came and i brought in president harry truman's bust to go with the benjamin franklin bust and then we have a great frederick remington sculpture here that many presidents have had right there cowboy sculpture and then this uh rodin's thinker was loaned to me by mr and mrs kaplan to for the term of my presidency and this is one of my favorite pictures in the white house i had it brought here it's never been in the oval office before it's a picture of people in new york marching on flag day during world war one it's a wonderful picture and the rain in manhattan so i like it very much and then over here is a wonderful american indian sculpture that dates back to 1913 and then on the back are just family pictures and my busts of lincoln and fdr and some of my personal keepsakes obviously you have a new stack of books what are you reading well someone let's see what is here i'm reading these are books i'm reading this is a the age of diminished expectations by paul krugman economics book kevin phillips new book about the middle class decline in the 1980s and this is your colleague jack nelson's new book on the ku klux klan and their campaign against the jews and this is just a mystery someone just gave me to read called goodnight irene i love to read mysteries late at night now the belief runs strong that you three or four books a week you can't possibly do your job and read that many books every week i work on three or four books read i don't actually sit there and read them from start to finish but i but i get a pretty good grasp on three or four books a week and i i'm always reading a couple of books at once i'm actually reading these two now from start to finish because i want to care about them well kevin phillips main thesis is that you better be careful that the middle class is volatile if you don't take care of them you'd like to be a one-term president that's

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like to be a one-term president that's the extrapolation of what you said i think that's right i think that all over the world now in wealthier countries the middle class is hard pressed and in the 1980s there were troubles for the middle class in every major country and more income inequality but it was worse in the united states than any of the other major countries because we invested less than education and training and we had unequal tax systems and so things got worse and the middle class began to lose ground because they had to pay so much for health care and housing and education mr president i want to look around the rest of the room you know you have so much information in your head it's very clear even people who don't like you and wish you weren't president it keeps a lot of information that he said when do you have time to think do you have time to think well i don't have as much time as i wish i did because this is basically a thinking as well as a doing job and i could sit there at this desk and work 18 hours a day every day and not deal with the big issues and come up with a creative solutions i have to be my own best thinker that's no offense to all the bright people who work for me but i need to keep my juices renewed so what i try to do is to think a lot in the morning when i get up that's why i run every morning you know that's a lot of my thinking time when i'm out running and then i try uh on the weekends to have at least one full day where i do nothing so that i can both rest and think about really big issues and make uh make notes about the things that i think we really need to do more on or people i need to speak with or ideas i need to flesh out this president cursed me out this window is what's been called one of the great views in the world you look out on the washington monument dimly in the background the jefferson memorial if i sit in here at night with the lights off and just look at it and think i do i do sometimes i

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think i do i do sometimes i sit here and sometimes i sit in my office up on the second floor of the white house which is directly opposite the jefferson memorial and the the light on thomas jefferson's head never goes out so i've been up there at 1 30 at night before and walk out on the porch that harry truman built in the white

house just thinking about problems and wishing that thomas jefferson could come alive and talk to me about them and you can see the uh flame from president kennedy's graveyard yes you can you can see that and then uh of course every morning i can run to the lincoln memorial i did today i ran up the steps and i read the second inaugural one more time and i'm never tired of doing that mr president you mentioned that you particularly like andrew jackson why i like him for a lot of reasons he was tough and decisive and he came to this job to change things and he really represented the kind of people that elected me he was a he was really a president of the people you know he turned his inaugural over to let people ordinary citizens come in and shake hands with him and look at the white house they were a little more rowdy than the americans were who came in to see me the day after the election but i mean after the inauguration but jackson was a guy that was full of life and action and he stood for things and and he really was tied to the ordinary people of this country and i identify with that you know seeing the bustier of franklin delano roosevelt he made his fireside chats from from the library that's right let's go over there i'll show it to you and maybe we can talk a little more there thanks we're walking out toward the rose garden which is not a bad view either this is the first place i ever was in the white house you know when i was 17 i was stood right here in this corner of the rose garden right right there and president kennedy came out here and gave his speech to the american legion boys nation delegates all right and then he came down and started over there and i shook hands with him while he worked down the line

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with him while he worked down the line and she'll cancel the other guys i never will forget that and the one of those magnolia trees andrew jackson supposedly allegedly planted this one and they're having trouble keeping it alive because it's gotten very big and the root systems are tough but every year for the last several years they clipped some of it and they replanted it so that there are a whole lot of trees now that have been planted and that are beginning to grow for years now that are the children of andy jackson's tree so if this thing ever dies finally they'll be able to come back into the white house and plant trees that are the direct literal linear descendants of that tree that's wonderful so it will live on well walking in this colonnade between the west wing between the oval office and the original mansion of the white house you ever walk in here tonight oh a lot this is the way i have to go to go to my office so you actually walk outside from the white house even in the snow and the cold you know i can always get a good brisk one block walk or so before i go to the oval office and i come over here quite frequently at night and just sit there and do a little more work i want to check something a number of people have said to me listen bill clinton president clinton sometimes is up at night walks along in here all hours of the night is that true i wouldn't say all hours tonight i have i think the latest i've ever been here is 1 30. one night i had a lot on my mind and i just and i was a little behind on my paperwork i just came over here and worked at 1 30. but i don't do it much because as i said i used to be able to do that and be great the next day and today i can't do it anymore so i owe it to the people not to do that anymore our special edition of 48 hours an interview with president bill clinton will continue in just a moment [Music]

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we're in the library now where president roosevelt made his fireside chats is this among your favorite rooms i love this room and this is a highly public room it is actually a lending library people who work around here can come in here and check out these books just like any other library it's also a public room that's open to everyone who comes in the white house on a tour so people get to see this wonderful library of america great old portrait of george washington and as i was telling you a moment ago the little known anonymous design for the white house by thomas jefferson he tried to become the architect of the white house anonymously and his design was rejected in favor of this one you were mentioning that certain presidents dominate this house as opposed to how they may be viewed from history what do you mean by that well what i meant but was that the most of the presidents who were dominant here were very important presidents for all of them uh lincoln is plainly the dominant presence here a bedroom named for him the room where he signed the emancipation proclamation his statues and portraits everywhere but andrew jackson is very important here he put both of the round porches on the white house and changed the front to

the back of the white house he and the back to the front uh theodore roosevelt built both the wings and his portraits are everywhere in his vigor and in youth um franklin roosevelt lives here longer than everyone else but he has just a couple of portraits here in the house and and a very modest presence considering the fact that he was plainly the dominant personality in terms of the length of time that he dominated here so it's just sort of interesting who who dominates because of the the contributions they made to the house itself i think what are the chances that bill clinton can be one of those dominant presidents in this house well i don't know

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don't know probably not much i think this house is in good shape i don't know that i can do anything to it that would improve it but i i imagine that i will enjoy living here and that i will revere the responsibility about as much as anybody who's ever been here what's been your biggest disappointment so far the the how hard it is to do everything i want to do as quickly as i want to do it the the pace of change although they say we're keeping quite a brisk pace the house of representatives adopted the budget resolution and and my jobs stimulus package last week in record time but i'm very i still get frustrated i have a hard time keeping up with everything and keeping it going forward i'm an impatient person by nature and i want to do things and that's that's been disappointing but i've been pleased that my staff has worked like crazy my cabinets worked hard we had a minimum so far kind of backbiting and factionalism and all that you hear about what would you count your biggest success so far i think moving the economic program as quickly as possible and developing a big consensus for the idea that we need to make a serious attempt to both reduce the deficit and increase investments in jobs and education and technology we've got to do both at the same time i've been very worried that i wouldn't be able to convince the american people or the congress to do both at the same time because we've never done it before in the history of the country but the competition we're in in the world and the problems we've had for the last 12 years absolutely require us to invest in our people and their jobs and to reduce the deficit at the same time i believe now it's my information i want to check it with yours that what you call the the job stimulus part of your economic plan is in trouble in the senate one you may not have the votes senator byrd said this afternoon that he saw trouble on the horizon

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saw trouble on the horizon does that match your information we plainly got the votes to pass it as it is or with very minor modifications uh what most americans don't know is that of the 100 members of the senate if you have one more than 40 you can shut everything down and you know there's been some discussion that that the republicans may try to filibuster the stimulus program and may try to stop us from trying to create any new jobs by holding they have 43 republican senators and they may be able to hold 41 of them and if they do you know they can indefinitely postpone a vote well there's some speculation about that i would hate to see that happen and i think it would not serve them well the american people did not elect any of us to perpetuate the kind of partisan gridlock we've had for the last several years and and particularly to have a minority of one house do that so i'm hopeful that that won't occur i do hear that and you know there's some argument about around the edges among the more uh pro-deficit reduction democrats that we should make some minor changes in the job stimulus program but they're not not great i don't think two things strike me not just about what you said but the way you said it correct me if i'm wrong it sounds to me like you're really worried about the possibility that it will be slowed if not stopped the stimulus part i think in the end we will pass it and i think that because i think that the people will be you know first of all i think the public would just be outraged at the thought that that we have a chance here to create a half a million new jobs and to do things that are good that need to be done and that it would be slowed up i'm just pointing out that that if the minority in the senate can get 40 votes plus one they can stop anything from happening that's what happened when they when they tried to gut the motor voter bill last week that would have really been a big it's a major piece of political reform makes it easier for all

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political reform makes it easier for all kinds of people to register and vote and they were willing to pass the motor voter bill which allowed people to register when they license their car but not allow people low income people to register when they pick up their medicaid or social security benefits or something else so i've seen it it can happen all i'm saying is it can happen i hope it won't we'll do our best to avert it mr president let me come to what i and i think and a lot of americans perceive to be the gut of this the economic indicators are looking good do we really need this what you call quote stimulus package now doesn't it or does it present a real threat to inflation and increasing the deficit why not either reduce it or call it off since the economy seems to be moving because we're not producing jobs and because it doesn't present a threat to inflation nor does it present a threat to the deficit we have i agreed over the next five years to reduce the deficit by four times as much as this stimulus package over and above the deficit reduction that i proposed 500 billion dollars of deficit reduction so we have blown away the amount of the stimulus package over the next four years in extra deficit reduction so we're not adding to the deficit secondly the financial markets have already discounted the prospect of this being inflationary third and most important of all unemployment in america is too high unemployment in all the rich countries except japan is too high we have to prove that we can generate jobs in america again and there is no indication that we are doing that now last month we had a lot of new jobs but way way over half of them were part-time jobs with no health care benefits and no security of lasting so we need this to create jobs this this program invest in community and invest in in people in their education i think it's very important mr president i want to talk to you about russia time for us to take a break stay here with us our special edition of 48 hours an interview with president

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48 hours an interview with president clinton will continue with conversation about russia in just a moment i think that yeltsin is on the way out and i think we have to be very careful about identifying with leadership that is as lost it's already lost its credibility [Music] mr president just right off the top of your head what percentage of this day have you spent dealing with the problems in russia probably 30 percent today that's a lot a lot why and let me ask a specific question if i'm trying to do right american lost my job trying to support my wife and kids tell me why i should favor spending foreign aid to help the russians because it's in your interest and let me tell you why it's in your interest for one thing america needs good customers for its products and russia a free russia with a free economy would prefer to do business with america over any other country they prefer to buy our farm products and other products and we have to look ahead every year we have to be looking ahead to find more and more markets for our products because as we get drawn into the global economy we got to sell more to other people to keep our incomes high secondly we have a real interest in keeping russia democratic and keeping them committed to reducing their nuclear arsenals why because otherwise we have to turn right around and rebuild our defenses at very high levels spend huge amounts of taxpayers money on nuclear arsenals raise our children in a more dangerous world and divert needed resources which ought to be spent on education and training and investment here at home so a safe a democratic free-market-oriented russia is in the

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free-market-oriented russia is in the immediate economic interest of every working american and very much in the interest of those folks and their children over the long run if we let russia revert to a country which will never be able to do business with us that's bad business if it reverts to a nationalist if even if not a communist a highly nationalist nuclear power that forces us to spend more of our money keeping our guard higher then that's money that will be diverted from the future of the working families and their children what about the theory that whatever money we try to give to the russians it'll be money down a black hole just disappear because chaos and pandemonium are hour by hour in that country well first of all we don't have enough money to to on our own affect the course of events ultimately the russian people will have to work out their own future but there are some specific things we can do which will not hurt us in fact will help us and which will send a clear signal to the forces of freedom and democracy and market economics in russia that we and the rest of the west will help them you know for example if we if we provide more food aid that helps our farmers and we can do it at relatively low cost to ourselves if if we can find a way to to help to privatize

more businesses and and to make those work that helps us if we can find a way to help them run their energy business better so they don't lose as much of their oil or their gas in the pipeline that helps them without hurting us it gives us a market for our pipeline products if we can find a way to help them convert their nuclear power plants that are built on the chernobyl model to a different energy source that could put a lot of our folks at work put a lot of their people to work and make them safer environmentally and economically so there there's a zillion things we can do now over the long run they're going to have to do some things for themselves they're going to have to

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for themselves they're going to have to get control of their rapid inflation they're going to have to make sure that they can get out of the bureaucracies that don't work anymore that clog up all reforms they're going to have to make a lot of decisions themselves but there are some targeted limited commitments we can make that no matter what happens won't hurt us very much and carry the potential of helping us a great deal while helping to keep good things alive in russia now you met with the russian foreign minister this afternoon i did did you come out of that with increased confidence that boris yeltsin will survive he's a very resilient fellow you know uh he's like all of us in public life he's not perfect i'm not perfect we all have our problems but he is a genuinely courageous man genuinely committed to freedom and democracy genuinely committed to reform and i think now he is more open perhaps than in the past to trying to work out some kind of accommodation with others uh who would negotiate with him to keep reform going even though they may have some different ideas well that's what i have to do here you know i have to work with the senate and the house the democrats and the republicans i think he's got to work on all that but i think he's got a fair chance to survive and i think not only the united states but i think the major western countries ought to do what they can to be supportive of his elected presidency now because he represents the ideals and the interests of our our nation and our way of life mr president correct me if i'm wrong but you've said a couple of times i think recently that boris olson is the only democratically elected leader in russia in fact his vice president alexander is also democratically elected he's going to go with that that if boris yeltsin is impeached because he's tried to suspend the constitution and alexander rusko who's now broken with the olsen and is also committed to democratic reform comes into power would you would the united states government consider him a democratically elected leader in swinging behind him

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elected leader in swinging behind him well first of all it is true that he was elected on the ticket with yeltsin but when yeltsin was elected he won an overwhelming popular victory if you go back and look at the distribution of votes there's no question that that's what happened look i don't want to get into what might happen or why they have questions you know that there is the constitution under which these proceedings might take place was uh one that that came in 1978 under the communist government the only popularly elected president ever is yeltsin yeltsin and ritzcoil were elected together on a ticket and we'll just have to see what happens i think in the end the russian people will resolve this one way or the other by what they do or don't do in the referendum in april mr president i'd love to spend hours talking foreign policy with you but we have such a short time here let me try to do something reasonably brief and that is mention some countries and potential problems out on the horizon and just have to respond briefly and very quickly iran particularly if if it is proven that iranian-sponsored terrorists had anything to do with the world trade center bombing would you be prepared to retaliate first let's note that even as we speak we were just given notice that another major arrest was made and someone brought to the united states from egypt where the apprehension was made that's very good news i don't want to speculate about who was behind it until i know that would be a very dangerous thing to do let me say that i'm i'm more concerned about the iranian government maintaining its militants perhaps supporting in general terrorist organizations are engaging in unsafe proliferation of weapons of mass destruction for its own use or for the benefit of others i wish iran would come into the family of nations they could have an enormous positive impact

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could have an enormous positive impact on the future of the middle east in ways that would benefit the economy and the future of the people of iran i am very troubled that instead of trying to contribute to alleviating a lot of the problems of the islamic peoples in the region they are seeming to take advantage of them i hope that they will moderate their course i want to move on but i want to make sure that i understand i asked the question should it be proven they had anything to do with it world trade would you be prepared to retaliate so far you're on the record as not answering that's right i want to be on the record is not answering i want um i want to maintain all options in dealing with terrorists but i want to be on the record that's not answering what used to be called the balkans which once was yugoslavia it's now referred to in shorthand is bosnia you seem and i say this respectfully but i want to say it directly you seem to have been all over the place in terms of policy toward bosnia can you one tell us exactly what u.s policy toward bosnia is at the moment and what we can expect in the future well first let me respond to your general comment i think i'm like most americans i am appalled by what has happened there i am saddened i am sickened and i know that our ability to do anything about it is somewhat limited i'm convinced that anything we do would have to be done through the united nations or through nato or through some other collective action of nations and i am limited also not only by what i think the united states can do or should do but by what our allies are willing to do now against that background we have done a number of things we have been instrumental in tightening the embargo against serbia it's much tighter than it was when i took office we have pushed for enforcement of the no-fly zone against the serbians i think we'll get that in the united nations sometime in the next couple of weeks we have begun an airlift operation which was initially criticized and is now universally recognized as having done an

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universally recognized as having done an awful lot to alleviate severe human suffering and to meet profound needs we have determined that we should support the vance owen peace process to try to bring it into hostilities there but we've also been very clear that if the bosnians will sign off under the vance owen plan and the croatian sign off on it and the serbs don't that we think that we're going to have to look at some other actions to to try to give the bosnians the means to at least defend themselves i'm very concerned about this this person we need to take a break time for me to say we'll be talking about health care and covering a lot of other ground in just a moment so stay here with us if we can revise the health care system to encompass everybody i mean i mean everybody i mean the person on the street right up to the richest person and everybody can get the same health care quality health care a lot of the problems with the health care system are going to be stopped [Music] um mr president before i get away from foreign policy very quickly north korea nuclear proliferation one of those things people's eyes glaze over important of course but is it something consumes a lot of your time well it's it's caused me a lot of concern in the last few days just for the benefit of our viewers that the north koreans have refused to allow the international atomic energy agencies inspectors to look into sites where they might be illegally producing nuclear weapons under the non-proliferation regime and because they wouldn't allow our inspectors in and because the united nations continued to insist that they do

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nations continued to insist that they do so the north koreans have now given us notice that they are going to withdraw which means they're going to put themselves outside the family of nations seeking to contain nuclear weapons that would be a great mistake i hope they don't do it it's deeply troubling to us and to the south koreans you know seoul which is now a teeming city of well over 8 million people is very close to the 38th parallel very close to north korea and over the last few years relations between those two nations had been warming and people began to dream of reunification and the same way that it happened in germany so this is a very sad and troubling development i don't want to overreact to it and the north koreans still have a couple of months to change their mind and i hope and pray that they will change their mind in return to the family of nations committed to restraining nuclear proliferations there's no easy transition to make to health care but we need to move on so if i may is i understand it correct me if i'm wrong you are telling the american people that their health care coverage will be increased that the deficit at the same time will be cut the

translation of that is that they're going to be yet another significant increase in taxes isn't it how can it be avoided not necessarily and we're looking at the options to do it and if i might let me try to describe the problem and i know we don't have a lot of time but let me be as brief as i can there are the following problems in health care the average person who has health insurance is pretty satisfied with the quality of health care but terrified of losing the health care coverage they're just afraid that either through higher deductibles higher co-pay or just outright loss of the insurance or they have to change jobs but they've had somebody in their family that's sick they won't be able to keep their health insurance that's one big problem the average business is terrified about the cost of health care we're spending 30 percent more in any other country and getting less forth so more and more people lose their health insurance every year and then

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health insurance every year and then there are a lot of people who don't even have access to health care they're not they never see doctors or dentists or go to a medical clinic so we've got the most expensive health care system in the world for the people that can afford it and stay with it that you get to choose your doctor choose your providers of all kinds and it's good stuff but millions of people live with insecurity and the cost of it is really breaking the economy now here is the dilemma in order to fix this the cost problem and the security problem you know to tell people you can still choose your doctor but you're never going to have to worry about losing your health insurance you have to find a way to pay to cover everybody who doesn't now have health insurance and to stop the loss of coverage for people who haven't that costs money but if you do it that permits you to cut out literally tens of billions of dollars of excess paperwork and administrative costs to stop a lot of other things that are driving up costs in the system and you literally say between now and the end of this decade hundreds of billions of dollars of both private dollars and taxpayer dollars so the issue is how do we make people secure so you can still pick your doctor we're going to never going to use your health insurance you're always going to have it no matter whether you change jobs or lose your job you're always going to have access to health care it's going to be good how do we do that bring the costs down and do it within a time that is acceptable how are you going to pay for that mr president well what we are looking at a lot of different options but the last thing i think we ought to do the last place we ought to look is to ask the employers and the employees of america who are paying too much for their health care right now to pay more to solve this short-term problem but here but the dilemma is this quite simply a hundred percent of the people who studied this problem say this if you pay if you you may have to pay some more in the short run or find some more money in the short run but over the long run it's going to save a massive amount of money i can do more to save money on the government deficit

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to save money on the government deficit and to free up money in the private sector by bringing health costs in line with inflation and solving this problem than any other single thing i can do what we're trying to find a way to do is to cover all the people who don't have coverage and to guarantee the security to the working people afraid of losing it without raising their taxes and we're looking for ways to do it there may be some options we've got 400 people including doctors nurses health economists experts from all over america working on this and they've done good work i think we got a chance i got another month to do it we'll be back in a moment with talk about gays in the military and a lot of other subjects we'll be back in just a minute it's important for you know people to be comfortable in their own you know sexuality however i don't believe that you know gays should be in the military they've always been homosexuals in the military it's really a non-issue it's a human rights issue so fully supportive of it [Music] mr president at your news conference yesterday correct me if i'm wrong but i thought uh you got a little testy when you were asked about gays in the military respect for you in the military am i wrong about that no i didn't feel testy i thought the it was an unusually worded question but that's all part of it no i i don't mind talking about it i think let me say i talk on a regular basis with general powell i have met with the joint chiefs i have a whole schedule of things that i'm working through now to continue to work with the military this is a very difficult time for them well is it correct

that you have reversed your position you see right now absolutely wrong did you misspeak yourself no i didn't misspeak myself uh nothing i said yesterday is in any way inconsistent with anything i've ever said before about this first first let's review this issue half the battle is over

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the battle is over half the battle is over the joint chiefs agreed that they should stop asking enlistees whether or not they're gay so they have already said we won't ask you to lie and we won't use your forms against you and if you get in and you perform well that's fine i agree and everybody else agrees that any kind of improper sexual conduct should be grounds for dismissal or other appropriate discipline there's no difference of opinion on that there is a very limited argument here which is if you do not do anything wrong but you do acknowledge that you are gay should you be able to stay in the military and if so should you be able to do anything anyone else can do the question i was asked yesterday was as follows would you consider any restrictions on duty assignments and the answer is i am waiting for the report of the secretary of defense made in conjunction with the joint chiefs they i think they're divided among themselves on this issue other nations which admit gays into the military some of them have no differences in duty assignments and some do what i said was if they made a recommendation to me would i review it and consider it of course i would i mean i asked them to study this i can't refuse then to to get the results of the study and act like that my mind's made up this is not an area where i have expertise i have to listen to what people say i will consider the arguments i have a presumption against any discrimination based on status alone but i will listen to any report filed mr president time is running out of us here i want to give you an opportunity on this program for this tremendous audience to indicate who your choice the supreme court's going to be it's a great opportunity for you to do it i want to give you an opportunity i thought you'd never ask i must i must tell you i have not reached the final decision the problems in in in russia and the work of the just the stuff i've been doing on the economy have kept me from spending quite

00:40:00 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wtfOs-TFCag&t=2400s)

economy have kept me from spending quite as much time on it as i would have but justice white to his everlasting credit gave me his letter now for his resignation in june and his successor can't take office till october so he gave us some time i love the constitution of the united states and i believe in the supreme court as an institution i used to teach constitutional law there will be few things that i will do in this job that i will take more seriously a few responsibilities i will cherish more and i will try to appoint someone that i think has the potential of being a magnificent justice someone who will be a defender of the constitution but someone who has good values and common sense and who understands the real life experiences of americans as well as the law if we let's talk about this for a moment i think you were just starting college when the last democratic president had a chance to choose someone for the supreme court you think about it it's been a long time a long time president johnson put thurgood marshall on the court and i just went to his funeral it was a long time ago if you want if you're not going to reveal who it's going to be give you another opportunity to do that tell us in what directions you hope to take the court or will you make an appointee hoping that he will at least bump the court in some other direction let's talk philosophically about the court well there was a lot of talk as you know during the last 12 years when the republicans held the white house about trying to move the court in a in a sort of a rightward direction indeed the political platforms of the republicans were repeatedly filled with litmus tests and specific requirements and everything and pushing the court to the right in fact this has always been the experience with presidents some of the appointees did in fact move to the right others turned out to be much more complicated people you know they they had different views i would like to put someone on the court who would

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to put someone on the court who would make sure that uh that there was a certain balance in the debate that there was a real feeling for the the rights of ordinary americans under the constitution but that also someone who was hard-headed who understood that that the criminal law had to be enforced that and that that that

you didn't want to over legalize the country there's a nice balance to be formed i'd also like to put someone on there who was a very cogent and powerful arguer and who could show respect for the other justices who could be a good colleague and who could could engage people in honest dialogue i mean i i think the supreme court is no different really from in that sense from a lot of other units i can't help but believe that when they're all talking together and working together and honestly trying to pick each other's brains that they're not only free to act on their own convictions but they'll learn from one another and maybe make better decisions mr president is my unfortunate duty now to ask the tough questions you don't want to hear number one you have a favorite in the oscar race for the academy awards you've seen these movies which one you favor uh i haven't seen them all so i can't say the ones i have seen i enjoyed i thought i thought clint eastwood's western was very good the unforgiving and a remarkable departure from a lot of his past movies i thought jack nicholson was brilliant and a few good men [Music] i try to see all the oscar movies every year i still i still haven't seen sin of a woman i'm working on that i'm trying to have it brought into the white house and and when i see them all then i i'll have my favorite but i don't think it's fair until i give them all a shot now i know you don't follow basketball but i'm willing to make you an offhand wager that north carolina slaughters arkansas but they don't i don't think they can slaughter them we haven't lost too many games by a lot of points arkansas doesn't have any tall players

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arkansas doesn't have any tall players but as you saw in st john's game where they played an incredibly talented well-disciplined team they often win by never quitting my philosophy that i've tried to follow myself mr president you're very generous we appreciate your hospitality thank you very much our special edition of 48 hours we'll continue in just a moment [Music] mr president at your news conference yesterday correct me if i'm wrong but i thought you got a little testy when you were asked about gays in the military respect for you in the military am i wrong about that no i didn't feel testy i thought it was an unusually worded question but that's all part of it no i i don't mind talking about it i think let me say i talk on a regular basis with general powell i have met with the joint chiefs i have a whole schedule of things that i'm working through now to continue to work with the military this is a very difficult time for them well is it correct that you have reversed your position you see you know absolutely wrong did you misspeak yourself no i didn't misspeak myself uh nothing i said yesterday is in any way inconsistent with anything i've ever said before about this first first let's review this issue half the battle is over half the battle is over the joint chiefs agreed that they should stop asking enlistees whether or not they're gay so they have already said we won't ask you to lie and we won't use your forms against you and if you get in and you perform well that's fine i agree and everybody else agrees that any kind of improper sexual conduct should be grounds for dismissal or other appropriate discipline there's no difference of opinion on that there is a very limited argument here which is if you do not do anything wrong but you

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if you do not do anything wrong but you do acknowledge that you are gay should you be able to stay in the military and if so should you be able to do anything anyone else can do the question i was asked yesterday was as follows would you consider any restrictions on duty assignments and the answer is i am waiting for the report of the secretary of defense made in conjunction with the joint chiefs they have i think they're divided among themselves on this issue other nations which admit gays into the military some of them have no differences in duty assignments and some do what i said was if they made a recommendation to me would i review it and consider it of course i would i mean i asked them to study this i can't refuse then to to get the results of the study and act like that my mind's made up this is not an area where i have expertise i have to listen to what people say i will consider the arguments i have a presumption against any discrimination based on status alone but i will listen to any report found mr president time is running out on us here i want to give you an opportunity on this program for this tremendous audience to indicate who your choice the supreme court's going to be it's a great opportunity for you to do it i want to give you an opportunity i thought you'd never ask i must i must tell you i've not reached a final decision the problems in in in russia and the work of the just the stuff i've been doing on the economy have kept me from spending quite

as much time on it as i would have but justice white to his everlasting credit gave me his letter now for his resignation in june and his successor can't take off until october so he gave us some time i love the constitution of the united states and i believe in the supreme court as an institution i used to teach constitutional law there will be few things that i will do in this job that i will take more seriously a few responsibilities i will cherish more and i will try to appoint

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cherish more and i will try to appoint someone that i think has the potential of being a magnificent justice someone who will be a defender of the constitution but someone who has good values and common sense and who understands the real life experiences of americans as well as the law if we let's talk about this for a moment i think you were just starting college when the last democratic president had a chance to choose someone for the supreme court you think about it it's been a long time a long time president johnson put thurgood marshall on the court and i just went to his funeral it was a long time ago if you want if you're not going to reveal who it's going to be give you another opportunity to do that tell us in what directions you hope to take the court or will you make an appointee hoping that he will at least bump the court in some other direction let's talk philosophically about the court well there was a lot of talk as you know during the last 12 years when the republicans held the white house about trying to move the court in a in a sort of a rightward direction indeed the political platforms of the republicans were repeatedly filled with litmus tests and specific requirements and everything and pushing the court to the right in fact this has always been the experience with presidents some of the appointees did in fact move to the right others turned out to be much more complicated people you know they they had different views i would like to put someone on the court who would make sure that that there was a certain balance in the debate that there was a real feeling for the the rights of ordinary americans under the constitution but that also someone who was hard-headed who understood that that the criminal law had to be enforced that and that that that you didn't want to over legalize the country there's a nice balance to be formed i'd also like to put someone on there who was a very cogent and powerful arguer and who could show respect for the other

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and who could show respect for the other justices who could be a good colleague and who could could engage people in honest dialogue i mean i i think the supreme court's no different really from in that sense from a lot of other units i can't help but believe that when they're all talking together and working together and honestly trying to pick each other's brains that they're not only free to act on their own convictions but they'll learn from one another and maybe make better decisions mr president is my unfortunate duty now to ask the tough questions you don't want to hear number one you have a favorite in the oscar race with the academy awards you've seen these movies which one you favor uh i haven't seen them all so i can't say the ones i have seen i enjoyed i thought i thought clint eastwood's western was very good the unforgiving and a remarkable departure from a lot of his past movies i thought jack nicholson was brilliant and a few good men [Music] i try to see all the oscar movies every year i still i still haven't seen sin of a woman i'm working on that i'm trying to have it brought into the white house and and when i see them all then i i'll have my favorite but i don't think it's fair until i give them all a shot now i know you don't follow basketball but i'm willing to make you an offhand wager that north carolina slaughters arkansas but they don't i don't think they can slaughter them we haven't lost too many games by a lot of points arkansas doesn't have any tall players but as you saw in saint john's game where they played an incredibly talented well-disciplined team they often win by never quitting my philosophy that i've tried to follow myself mr president you're very generous we appreciate your hospitality thank you very much our special edition of 48 hours we'll continue in just a moment [Music] you

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